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March 15, 2012

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The Honorable Alan Lowenthal
Member, California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 2032
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 1456

Dear Senator Lowenthal:

The Little Hoover Commission supports SB 1456, the measure you have authored that authorizes the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to set academic and progress standards to be met by those students who apply for enrollment fee waivers, and to develop a formula for funding a Student Success and Support Program.

The Commission supports this measure based on findings and recommendations in its report, *Serving Students, Serving California: Updating the California Community Colleges to Meet Evolving Demands* (February 2012). In this report, the Commission reviewed the California Community Colleges and found that more collaborative work needs to be done to ensure students' success in the Community College System. The Commission found that far too many students enroll California community colleges but do not complete a program, graduate with a degree or certificate, or meet their educational goals. These students' success is vital to the achievement and skills of California and its workforce. The Commission has urged the state, the Community College System and the students, themselves, to re-focus programs, priorities and funding so that they emphasize adherence to an education plan and success along a path, rather than prioritizing enrollment figures.

SB 1456 calls for waiving fee requirements only for students who have identified a goal for a degree, certificate, transfer or career advancement; meet academic and progress standards; and meet one of three income-related criteria. The bill also calls upon the Legislature to recognize that student success is the responsibility of the institution and student, supported by well-coordinated and evidence-based student and instructional services designed to foster academic success. Among other programs, the bill calls for student counseling and education planning services, to assist students with developing education plans, assessment of aptitude and interests, and referrals to needed services. For these reasons, the Commission supports SB 1456.

As the bill moves through the committee process, I will be writing letters on behalf of the Commission to legislators urging aye votes. If you feel my presence and testimony at a hearing would be helpful, please let me know, and I will make every attempt to be available.

Sincerely,

Stuart Drown
Executive Director

c: Commissioners, Little Hoover Commission
Senator Carol Liu, Coauthor